

Enviro News

A newsletter for environmental programs in Harford County

Welcome

The Growing Home Campaign, a new program designed to increase tree cover in residential areas, is beginning in Harford County this fall. Read about the program in this issue and learn how it can benefit both you and your community. Also learn about the many exciting educational activities available to the public at the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center located in Abingdon. Plan to visit this facility and join in the fun! Then, as illustrated in "A Rude Awakening", think about the cumulative affect even small actions by individuals can have on the environment.

Enviro News is distributed quarterly (March, June, September and December) and is available in all Harford County Library branches, in display racks at various locations throughout the County, and on-line at www.harfordcountymd.gov under Downloads.



Job Well Done, Jacob Rosas.

Jacob recently planted a tree at Rocks State Park that he raised for three years from a seedling. He and his family would like to thank the park ranger for his assistance in this project.

The Growing Home Campaign

by Joanne Bowen
Harford County Water Resources

Trees serve many varied purposes. They provide homes and food for wildlife. Their roots stabilize soils and reduce erosion; their fallen leaves add necessary nutrients to soil and stream systems. Trees help combat global warming, taking in carbon dioxide and giving off oxygen through the process of photosynthesis. They provide shade, cooling the air, land and water, and also provide windbreaks, helping to reduce energy costs for buildings. Trees beautify yards and add to the value of residential properties.

In 2006, Baltimore County began the Growing Home Campaign. The campaign is an innovative approach to expand the urban tree canopy on residential properties through a public-private partnership between local government, local nurseries and garden centers, and homeowners.

The program offers homeowners a monetary incentive to plant trees – coupons for \$10 off on trees selling for \$25 or more. Using one coupon per tree, there are no limits to the number of trees a homeowner can purchase from a participating nursery or garden center.

More than 2,600 trees have been bought and planted by homeowners through the Growing Home Campaign since it's inception 2 years ago. The pro-

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David R. Craig
Harford County Executive
"Preserving Harford's Past, Protecting Harford's Future"



Schedule of Events

Maryland Lighthouse Challenge. Sept 20-21; 8am-6pm. Visit Concord Point Lighthouse in Havre de Grace & other MD lighthouses. Free. 410-939-4800.

Guided Walk of North Park Trail. Sept 20 & Nov 15; 10:00am; Lock House Museum, Havre de Grace. Free. 410-939-5780. www.lockhousemuseum.org.

The Graw Days. Oct 11; 10am-5pm; Havre de Grace festival to celebrate when there was horse racing at The Graw. Free. 410-939-1811. www.mainstreethdg.com.

Haunted Happenings. Oct 25; 11am-4pm. Havre de Grace Maritime Museum, 100 Lafayette Street. Stories, costumes, crafts, food, fun and festivities, with a maritime flare. Admission. 410-939-4800. www.hdgmaritimuseum.org

Native American Exhibit. Nov 9, 1-4pm. Hays House, 324 Kenmore Ave., Bel Air. Amazing display of Native American clothing and bead work. Admission. 410-838-7691. www.harfordhistory.net



For More Info

The Growing Home Campaign
www.growinghome.info 410-887-4488
ext 287

Anita C. Leight Estuary Center
www.otterpointcreek.org 410-612-1688

Harford County Government
www.harfordcountymd.gov 410-879-2000



Recommended Readings

The Brook Book
by Jim Arnosky. 2008.

An informative guide to brooks and streams for young naturalists. Through simple language and lively illustrations readers are encouraged to take a closer look at the animals and plants that live in and around our brooks and streams. A field trip in book form.

Growing Home Campaign (continued from page 1)

gram also offers homeowners extensive information on the importance of planting trees, guidance on tree species selection, site considerations, and instructions on tree planting. The goal is to motivate homeowners to plant 10,000 trees on residential properties over the next few years.



The Growing Home Campaign represents an alternative management approach to reducing the impacts of stormwater runoff. Trees are a very cost effective and long-lasting way to manage stormwater in developed

areas of the County since retrofitting these areas with traditional stormwater management measures is both difficult and expensive. Trees slow stormwater runoff, reduce flooding potential, reduce streambank erosion, and filter pollutants before they reach our rivers and streams.

In April 2008, Baltimore City partnered with Baltimore County to offer the Growing Home Campaign to City residents. This autumn, Harford County will partner with Baltimore County to offer the program to Harford County homeowners.

Six retail nurseries and gardens centers scattered throughout Harford County already participate in the Growing Home Campaign. This summer additional retailers were contacted, inviting them to the program this fall.

For each \$10 coupon used, Harford County and the participating retailer will each contribute \$5. In return, the retailer receives advertising in the Growing Home Campaign brochure and website, acknowledging their participation in the campaign's restoration efforts. The coupons also bring customers to their establishments, along with opportunities for additional business.

Growing Home Campaign brochures and tree coupons are available at public libraries and senior centers in Baltimore County, Baltimore City, and Harford County. They are also available online at www.growinghome.info or www.baltimorecountymd.gov/go/trees.

The Maryland Nursery and Landscape Association supports the Growing Home Campaign, as do the Chesapeake Bay Program, USDA Forest Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation and Baltimore Gas and Electric Company.

Guest Author

A Rude Awakening

by Deborah Rosemary Smith

Who hasn't, without a second thought, sometime during life, dropped a piece of trash to the ground: tissue from a pocket, a wad of chewing gum, perhaps a cellophane wrapper?

Here, in my Harford County residence, where Bradford pears mark property lines, boxwoods exude their spring-time mustiness, and hemlocks toss back the wind, unthinking, I chuck an item into the storm drain at the edge of my property. Once tossed, I continue to look through the mail, walk up my driveway, and go on with life.

Months later, when August heat holds every breath hostage, the Inner Harbor 30 miles away beckons, seems a logical diversion. I go.

I stop in Canton, where a slight breeze encircles the Korean War Memorial; kicks up heat waves over lieutenants and captains immortalized in marble. Looking for relief, I sit by the water's edge, listening to diminutive laps of the Patapsco River against concrete. Gradually I lose the breeze in a mountain of debris collecting and overflowing onto the walkway.

"Such filth!" I exclaim. And in my haughtiness, I stand. What creatures act so? What pollution is this? Don't people, boaters, know that what doesn't sink must float, end up somewhere?

Appalled, I step back, attempt a retreat to my rural lands. But I am intrigued; I study the sludge of blue plastic bags, Tastycake wrappers, opaque milk quarts, glass fifths, cardboard cartons empty of Coors. Rolling in the froth I glimpse a shiny edge, an image.

Filled with disgust but curious as a cat, I reach, pull back, try again. I bend, extend two fingers, and grab the item as if it were a hot piece of toast. It drips. I inch back, hoping a quick shuffle will keep me clean.

My stomach clinches, sinks; I cannot breathe. The lack of oxygen has little to do with the stifling heat. Embarrassed, I look around. Ashamed, I stare at my own addition to this harbor wasteland, this floating mess of muck. My seemingly harmless discard of the past is present here in this everyday gathering of unconscious acts.

How is it I am so convinced that what I hold belonged to me? It is the unwanted picture of myself.

Volunteers/Education

Anita C. Leight Estuary Center- A Secret Worth Sharing

by S.C. Torrington
Otter Point Creek Alliance



If you've ever driven along Route 40 between Edgewood and Aberdeen in Harford County, you've crossed Otter Point Creek, a 672-acre freshwater, tidal marsh tributary at the end of the Bush River.

The next time you're in the area, turn down Otter Point Road and enjoy the tranquil surroundings at the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center (ACLEC). The cabin-like Center sits on property, once a 61-acre family homestead, generously donated by Mrs. Leight in the early 1980s for the enjoyment and education of future generations.

As part of the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Maryland, the mission of the Estuary Center is to facilitate researchers, provide education, and increase public awareness and appreciation of estuarine ecosystems.

"Our estuary is the largest in the upper bay that's accessible to the public, like an oasis in a sea of development," observes Shanna Jay, Park Manager. "A great place locally to get away and enjoy nature. It's an eye-opener to see just how much wildlife and plants are still here and making this their home."

The Center, open to the public on Thursdays through Sundays, houses a hands-on exhibit hall, a library, and a Discovery Room with its popular indoor Turtle Pond, complete with a Turtle Cam to observe stinkpot, painted, and spotted turtles. Several terrariums hold snakes, land turtles, and toads. Families are invited to the monthly Critter Dinners—but be warned, in keeping with the laws of nature, the snakes are fed live mice.

Once outside, you can hike several varied trails, seven days a week, from dawn until dusk. The easy, three-quarter-mile Discovery Trail winds past several gardens and ponds, up a small hill, and into the woods, with signage posted along the way. The Family Fun Backpack is filled with field guides, maps and activities designed to aid self-guided exploration. A portion of the trail is fully handicapped-accessible, ending at a platform in the woods overlooking the water. The trail to the water is a steep quarter-mile blacktop path to a small, stony beach

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Anita C. Leight Estuary Center (continued from page 3)

with picnic tables. This is the location of the annual Wade-In Festival where all you need to measure the water quality of the creek is a pair of white tennis shoes.

The Estuary Center offers a variety of nature and craft programs. Themed (including a full moon) canoe, kayak and pontoon trips start in April and run through the fall. A spring Wildflower and Woods Walk with a naturalist is a great way to introduce your children to Maryland flora. Outdoor Cooking, Kids Water Chemistry, and Paper Making are just a small sampling of the classes available. In the summer, there are day camps, which give the kids a chance to canoe the marsh, explore the local woods, and make natural crafts. Autumn brings its annual Haunted Halloween Hike and the BioBlitz, a two-day environmental treasure hunt of searching the park for plants and animals to document the different species that make their home in the park and in Bosely Conservancy in Edgewood.

Educational opportunities are offered to public and private schools and home educators. Activities, such as the Otter Point Creek Environmental Survey, are designed to provide middle school students with an opportunity to experience environmental field and lab work with applications in real world situations. Now a certified Maryland Green Center, the Center will offer ongoing professional development and support to aid Harford County Schools in becoming green schools.

Volunteers are welcome and are considered the heart of the Reserve's operations. Monitoring Volunteers participate in Fish Seining Surveys and Turtle Telemetry, while Program Volunteers assist with school programs and canoe and kayak trips. A favorite among teenagers (ages 14 and up) is the opportunity to become a Marsh Mucker, caring for the live animals at the Center and assisting the naturalists.

The Anita C. Leight Estuary Center and Leight Park, located at 700 Otter Creek Point Road, Abingdon, MD 21009, is open Thursday - Saturday, 10am to 5pm, and Sunday, noon to 5pm. The center publishes a seasonal quarterly calendar of programs, which is available at the Center, in public libraries and online. Most programs, regardless of any fee, require registration, as they fill up quickly. For more information, call 410-612-1688, or go to www.otterpointcreek.org. Come be a part of the best kept secret in Harford County!

Fall is a great time to plant a tree. With cool weather, new tree plantings require less water, are less susceptible to root rot, and are able to establish roots before the ground freezes for winter.

Install weather stripping and caulk around windows and doors to seal out drafts and reduce energy use and costs.

Turn off your computer and peripherals at the power strip. Transformers continue to draw power even when electronics are turned "off".

Reduce paper waste and save trees by opting out of unwanted junk mail.

Go to www.newdream.org/junkmail or www.catalogchoice.org for tips on how to remove your name from lists.

Enviro News

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